



SAINT CECILIA

READER GUIDELINES

Preparation

Both verbal and non-verbal communication is important in this ministry. A reader who comes to Mass early and spends fifteen minutes before mass reading in the ambo tells every one that he or she is not prepared. Prepare for your readings beforehand by using the Workbook for Lectors. Make note of the numbered reading. Read your materials aloud in practice (in front of a mirror to help practicing looking up at the congregation.) Remember that you are conveying the thoughts and ideas of the Scripture, not just reading words. Emphasize key words and phrases with your voice, conveying a message, not reading in a monotone voice. Read slowly!!! Remember people listen more slowly than they read or speak. Understand the feeling, purpose, and intention of the author as well as the type of literature you are reading. (I.e. a poem, story, fable, psalm, letter, prophecy, etc). Review any names or words that you are unfamiliar with. Pronunciations are listed in the back of the reader Workbook. Pronounce your words clearly and use facial expressions to give life to the readings.

Arrival at Church

Arrive at least ten or fifteen minutes before the start of mass. Advise the priest that you will be the reader so that he knows you have arrived and can give you any special instructions. If there is a visiting priest, introduce yourself and, after checking the ambo, advise him, if there are announcements that will be read after the post communion prayer and before the final blessing.



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Before the Liturgy

Check out the ambo and the microphone to ensure that it is working properly. Make sure that the lectionary book for the readings is on the ambo and open to the readings for the day. Make sure that the General Intercessions are also there. Read them over, note any names and make sure that you can pronounce them correctly. Write them phonetically if needed. Note if there are any announcements and confirm whether you or the presider will read them (usually they are included in the book with the intercessions that the priest will have). If there is no organist present, you will read the responsorial psalm. Return to the gathering area in the rear of the Church, obtain the Book of the Gospels (except during Lent when it is not used), greet the arriving parishioners and wait for the start of Mass. *(When the deacon is present, he will process in with the Book of the Gospels, the reader will process in as usual but without the Book of Gospels)*

Note: At the 10 a.m. mass only, prior to the readings, children are invited to the Parish office for a special reading of the day's gospel. Check with the presider to see if he will make this announcement or whether he wants you to do so before the first reading.



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Role and Responsibility

The role of the reader is a significant part of the sacred liturgy of the Mass. Thus it is important for the reader to learn the full significance of what they are doing and saying. It is this knowledge that will enable the lay minister to perform his or her function in such a way so as to give proper and correct expression to the word and actions being spoken and performed. For example, the reader who comes to Church neatly dressed, reads clearly and succinctly, showing that he or she has prepared the reading beforehand, implicitly expresses to the congregation how important the word of God is in the Liturgy by demonstrating how important it is to him or her. This importance is demonstrated by appearance, preparation, and enunciation. Conversely, the opposite is true.

In this role you have an important responsibility to ensure that the celebration of the Eucharist is conducted in a solemn atmosphere through your ability to communicate with the congregation and convey the message found in the Scripture readings. In fulfilling this role, the dress of the reader is of special importance. To celebrate the liturgy the priest wears special vestments. The same should be true of the other ministers participating at the Mass. Therefore, all male readers are expected to be dressed in a jacket and tie. Female readers should have on tasteful and discreet outfits.



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Entrance Procession

At the start of the Mass, process down the aisle behind the altar servers carrying the Book of the Gospels (without the Book when the deacon is present) slightly elevated in both hands. When you reach the step leading to the sanctuary, move to the left and wait until the priest bows (while holding the Book of the Gospels you do not bow!). Proceed directly to the altar and place the Book of the Gospels on the altar. Then take a seat in the first pew on the end of aisle in front of the ambo. Do not bow.

Liturgy of the Word First Reading

After the opening prayer is completed and the priest goes to his chair, approach the ambo. Before ascending the steps of the sanctuary, stop and bow to the altar. Then ascend the steps and take your place at the ambo. The priest may, in a very few words, introduce the faithful to the Liturgy of the Word. Wait in silence to gain the attention of the congregation. Read the first reading. (Don't read the introductory sentences at the beginnings of the readings in the Lectionary *printed in italics*). Remember, when doing the readings, imagine that you are telling a story to the congregation. Your tone should be relaxed, comfortable, friendly yet informative. Make sure that you enunciate your words, speak clearly, and do not rush your words together. Speak slowly and deliberately and periodically look at the congregation. Try to pick out one or two faces in the crowd on different sides of the church. At the conclusion of the reading, pause for a second, then proclaim "The Word of the Lord". Then pause before the responsorial psalm. (5 to 10 seconds)

Responsorial Psalm

If the responsorial psalm is sung, step away from the ambo and stand. If not sung, read the responsorial psalms. Do not say "The responsorial psalm is." at the beginning of the responsorial psalm. Read each verse and then gesture with your hand for the congregation to respond. At the conclusion of the responsorial psalm pause (5 to 10 seconds).



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Second Reading

Begin the second reading. At the conclusion, remove the Lectionary from on top of the ambo and place it underneath. Leave the ambo; descend the steps of the sanctuary, turn and bow to the altar. Then, return to your pew and remain standing for the Gospel.

Petitions

At the conclusion of the Creed, return to the ambo (do not bow), turn and face the priest as he introduces the general intercessions. Then read the general intercessions. At the conclusion, turn and face the priest while he says the concluding prayer. Then return to your pew (do not bow). *(If the deacon is present, he will read the general intercessions)*

Announcements

At the conclusion of communion and after the collection has been taken, the priest will rise for the concluding prayer. Immediately following the prayer, if there are announcements read them (this is rare as the priest normally read them). At the conclusion of the announcements, return to the pew.

Closing the Liturgy

As the priest leaves the sanctuary join with the other liturgical ministers at the foot of the altar (Note: the Book of the Gospels *is not* brought out in the recessional). Process out of Church in the same order that you processed in, behind the altar servers. After Mass, ensure that the Lectionary is ready for the next Mass.